

July 29, 1970

OPENING REMARKS

Press Conference, Washington, D.C., NASA Headquarters,
9:30 a.m., EDT

Dr. Thomas O. Paine, Administrator,
Commenting on his resignation from the
National Aeronautics and Space Administration,
Announced July 28 in San Clemente, Calif.

"Good morning. When I faced up to the job in the Space Agency, it was clear to me that there were two major responsibilities to be discharged. One of these was the meeting of the commitment that we had made to the American people that we would land on the Moon within the decade of the 1960s and the second was to lay out the post-Apollo program which would follow this decade of the 60s and its very strong concentration on one particular goal in space.

"I think that the new administration coming to Washington in the final three missions [leading to the first lunar landing] of the Apollo program was a very fortunate coincidence for NASA because it allowed us to involve the President personally in the kind of decisions that had to be made as we proceeded to lay out the post-Apollo space program for the United States and to get its general approval within the Administration and then within the Congress.

"The action that was taken yesterday* by the Congress in conference, which essentially gave us more than 98% of the monies that the President had approved for the 1971 budget, but more importantly followed a very intensive review by the Congress of the proposals we had made for the new space program of the 70s in many ways represents a major step forward in the second concern I had which was to lay out the post-Apollo program and secure initial approval for it in the Administration and the Congress.

"In looking at the present situation then of the Administrator's office here in NASA, it struck me that we had reached a point where the person who heads up the space program should be prepared now to devote very many

* July 28 House-Senate Appropriation Bill. Total appropriations will be \$3,268,675,000.

months to the prosecution of this new program; for defending it annually as it goes before the budget process; and it was my conclusion that this was an excellent time for a change of command at NASA since, for personal reasons, I could not give it the many months of continuing activity which would be required by the Administrator.

"In talking to the President yesterday at San Clemente, he reiterated his interest in the space program and his continuing support for it. He did ask me as I left the government to return to private life to continue to interest myself in the program and to support it from outside the government as I have from within. I assured him that I would always be available to him and would do everything in my power to help this very fine program continue to have the kind of momentum in the 70s that has brought such greatness to America in the 1960s.

"Leaving the government, of course, is a very sad thing to do. Both Barbara and I will greatly miss all of the fine people in NASA, and I can even confess now, I think, as I return to private life, that we will even miss the reporters that have really enriched our life so much here in Washington. They've been a great bunch of people to work with and we will never forget them. Our hearts will remain with NASA; there is no question about this, but life goes on; we should be progressing to the next phase, and this is an excellent time to do this.

"I believe that we leave NASA in very strong shape. There is always the question when the boss leaves whether this implies a dissatisfaction with budget levels or dissatisfaction with relations with the White House, with the Congress, and with the press. I can assure you that I feel none of these at all. On the contrary, my relations with the President (I say this now as one who has submitted his resignation) have been of the very finest. I have always had instant access, anytime when I required it; he was always at the other end of the telephone when I needed him and, at no time, was I ever in any way made to feel that he was looking over my shoulder or that we couldn't make the kinds of program decisions -- the kind of action decisions -- that were required, all the way from the final flights that took us to the Moon through the accident that we sustained in Apollo 13 when he was with us all the way.

"And his support has meant a tremendous amount to the program and to me personally. During the Apollo 13 mission

when I was out with the wives in Clear Lake [a Houston suburb] talking to them and really we were facing the very difficult question of whether or not we would be successful in the rescue operation, it was a great comfort to them to say the President has just called. We know it's a difficult situation but we know that everything's being done, and his call has certainly made us feel better about this.

"When we were flying out to Hawaii after the splash-down and President and Mrs. Nixon, you recall, took the wives and parents along on the trip, the way that Mrs. Nixon routed the President out of his stateroom and took Mary Haize [wife of Astronaut Fred Haize] in and said, Mary, you lie down; we don't want to have any babies born on Air Force 1. This was the kind of relationship that we had, and I certainly leave working for the President with great reluctance too.

"As far as our relation to the Congress goes, coming to Washington as I did, without having this kind of experience in the past, I faced this with some trepidation. Really this is not the kind of thing I do best. I am not a professional or amateur politician, and I must say that the relationships have been fine.

"Working with Senator Anderson, who is one of the great men in America, a man who very well could have been on any Presidential-Vice Presidential ticket, has been a rare privilege for me. Working with all the committee members -- particularly I should mention Margaret Chase Smith who really is a most impressive person and a wonderful example of the finest that the United States Senate has. George Miller, Tiger Teague, Jim Fulton, Joe Karth, all people with, from time to time, we might have differences, but really they were differences that we could get at and solve.

"And in the appropriation area -- working with Senator Pastore, a fellow Rhode Island type, a wonderful person, and of course, Gordon Allott, on that committee, again one of the really fine people in the Senate.

"Similarly, on the House side, we've gone up to many of these hearings, with men like Joe Evans, really it's been a great experience from that standpoint. So we leave with great regret but, as I said before, I think this is the appropriate time for the change in command, and the

only reason you didn't hear about it in advance was that it was a decision made in a very short time.

"It really was only made finally Saturday [July 25] and I discussed my return with the G.E. people only within the last several weeks. My feeling about this has always been, with all of you that, once the decision was made, you should know about it right away. So I immediately called the President, made the appointment for yesterday, and announced it. I'd be very happy to respond to any questions you might have."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOLLOWED

NEWS



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FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE
July 29, 1970

NEWS CONFERENCE

DR. THOMAS O. PAINE'S RESIGNATION
AS NASA ADMINISTRATOR

PARTICIPANTS:

DR. THOMAS O. PAINE, Administrator, National Aeronautics and
Space Administration, Headquarters,
Washington, D.C.

MR. JULIAN W. SCHEER, Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs,
National Aeronautics and Space Administration,
Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

(Dr. Paine's resignation as NASA Administrator was announced
at 3 p.m. EDT July 28 at the San Clemente, Calif., Western
White House)

* * *

MR. SCHEER: Gentlemen, in March of 1968, President Nixon named Dr. Thomas O. Paine Administrator of NASA, and at least once a week since then, I have been asked a question about rumors of his impending retirement. And I would like at this time to change my answer to yes, and especially to Billie Joe Richie who is not here today, and at this time introduce Dr. Paine for a short statement and any questions you might have on the announcement of yesterday.

DR. PAINE: Well, good morning. When I faced up to the job in the space agency, it was clear to me that there were two major responsibilities that had to be discharged. One of these was the meeting of the commitment that we had made to the American people that we would land on the moon within the decade of the 1960's, and the second was to lay out the post-Apollo program which would follow this decade of the Sixties and its very strong concentration on one particular goal in space.

I think that the new Administration coming to Washington in the final three missions of the Apollo program was a very fortunate coincidence for NASA, because it allowed us to involve the President personally in the kinds of decisions that had to be made as we proceeded to lay out the post-Apollo space program for the United States, and to get its general approval within the Administration, and then within the Congress.

The action that was taken yesterday by the Congress in conference, which essentially gave us more than ninety-eight percent of the monies that the President had approved for the 1971 budget, but more importantly followed a very intensive review by the Congress of the proposals we had made for the new space program of the seventies, in many ways represents a major step forward in the second concern which I had, which was to lay out the post-Apollo program and secure initial approval for it in the Administration and the Congress.

In looking at the present situation then, the Administrator's office here in NASA, it struck me that we had reached the point where the person who heads up the space program should be prepared now to devote very many months to the prosecution of this new program, for defending it annually as it goes before the budget processes, and it was my conclusion that this was an excellent time for a change of command at NASA, since for personal reasons, I could not give

it the many months of continuing activity which would be required by the Administrator.

In talking to the President yesterday at San Clemente, he reiterated his interest in the space program and his continuing support for it. He did ask me, as I left the Government to return to private life, that I would continue to interest myself in the program and to support it from outside the Government as I have from within, and I assured him that I would always be available to him and would do everything in my power to help this very fine program continue to have the kind of momentum in the seventies that has brought such greatness to American in the 1960's.

Leaving the Government, of course, is a very sad thing to do; both Barbara and I will greatly miss all of the fine people in NASA, and I can even confess now I think, as I return to private life, that we will even miss the reporters that have really enriched our life so much here in Washington. It's been a great bunch of people to work with, and we'll never forget it. Our heart will remain with NASA, there is no question about this.

But life goes on, and we should be progressing on to the next phase, and this is an excellent time to do this.

I believe that we leave NASA in very strong shape. There is always the question when the boss leaves whether this implies a dissatisfaction with budget levels or dissatisfaction with relations with the White House, with the Congress, with the press, and I can assure you that I feel none of these at all.

On the contrary, my relations with the President -- and I say this now as one who has submitted his resignation -- have been of the very finest. I have always had instant access any time that I required it. He was always at the other end of the telephone when I needed him. But at no time was I ever in any way made to feel that he was looking over my shoulder, that we couldn't make the kinds of program decisions, the kinds of action decisions that were required, all the way from the final flights that took us to the moon through the accident that we sustained in Apollo 13, when he was with us all the way.

And his support has meant a tremendous amount to the program and to me personally. During the Thirteen mission, when I was out with the wives in Clear Lake, talking

to them, and really we were facing the very difficult question of whether or not we would be successful in the rescue operation, it was a great comfort to them to say that the President has just called and we know it's a difficult situation, but we know that everything is being done and his call has certainly made us feel better about this.

When we were flying out to Hawaii after the splash down, and President and Mrs. Nixon, you will recall, taking the wives and parents along on the trip, the way that Mrs. Nixon routed the President out of his stateroom and took Mary Haise in and said, Mary, you lie down, we don't want to have any babies born on Air Force One. This is the kind of relationship we had, and I certainly leave working for the President with great reluctance, too.

As far as relations with the Congress goes, coming to Washington as I did without having this kind of experience in the past, I faced this with some trepidation. Really, this is not the kind of thing that I do the best. I am not a professional or amateur politician, and I must say that the relationships have been fine. Working with Senator Anderson, who is one of the great men in America, a man who very well could have been on any Presidential, Vice-Presidential ticket, has been a rare privilege for me.

Working with all the committee members -- particularly I should mention Margaret Chase Smith, who really is a most impressive person and a wonderful, wonderful example of the finest that the United States Senate has. George Miller, Tiger Teague, Jim Fulton, Joe Karth -- all people that from time to time I might have differences with, but really they were differences that we could get at and solve.

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Similarly, on the House side, we have gone up to many of these hearings -- Joe Evans, and really it's been a great experience from that standpoint.

So we leave with great regret, but as I said before, I think this is the appropriate time for the change in command, and the only reason why you didn't hear about it

in advance was that it was a decision made in a very short time, it really was only made finally Saturday, and I discussed my return with the G. E. people only within the last several weeks, and my feeling about this, as it has always been with all of you, was that once the decision was made, you should know about it right away. So I immediately called the President and made the appointment for yesterday and announced it.

I would be very happy to respond to any questions you might have.

QUESTION: Tom, will you tell us a little about the leadership situation here at NASA and how that's going to shape up, temporarily, and if you know, permanently?

DR. PAINE: With respect to the question of the new Administrator, which is the final part, Bill, since this entire situation is only twenty-four hours old, there has been no discussion or decision on this.

With respect to the leadership situation in NASA, I am very proud of the way in which the depth of talent we have had at NASA has enabled us to close the ranks as the people who had devoted their lives to achieving Apollo found it expedient to go to other jobs at the end of this.

I think that Rocco Petrone, heading up the Apollo program is a first class guy, fully qualified to carry that out. Having George Low in as Deputy is again an indication of the great depth of talent that we have had, a great guy who can make all the decisions that have to be made.

Bringing Wernher von Braun in to do the advance planning has already proved to have been a very sound decision. I am very pleased with the progress that's being made in that, particularly in the longer range aspect of our planning.

The way that we have got the manned space flight thing with Dale Myers in, backstopped for George Miller and so forth, the general situation is I think that the depth of talent we have had has been fully capable of filling in the gaps that have been left.

QUESTION: One follow up, if you please. Specifically, will George Low take on the duties of, the title of Acting Administrator; if so when?

DR. PAINE: I'm not sure what will happen there. Although when Jim Webb left, I was given the title Acting Administrator, it's really not necessary that that be done. Because as soon as I step down, or in the event that I am out of town, even, George Low is the Administrator, acting for that period of time.

QUESTION: Dr. Paine, this announcement having come rather suddenly, I gather that it came rather suddenly in house. I'm wondering what the reaction from the leadership within the organization has been to your sudden disclosure.

DR. PAINE: I think that the initial reaction was one of surprise, perhaps even shock. Contrary to the reports that Julian Scheer gave me yesterday that every time he called NASA he heard champagne corks popping and there was dancing in the hall, I think that on the contrary, that it has come as a surprise to the people at NASA. But I think when they stop and think about it and the reasoning behind it, I certainly hope, anyway, that they will agree with me that this is indeed an appropriate time for a change in command, and I am sure that when the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoints the new Administrator, that the program will go on in even better shape.

QUESTION: Dr. Paine, would you identify the key issues that remain facing the agency, let's say initially in the '72 budget and if you have a moment, looking further afield, the decisions that remain to be made.

DR. PAINE: I think that the question of the future of the Apollo program is one that must be addressed particularly in the light of the final actions in the 1971 budget and as we look ahead to the 1972 budget. Since we have suspended production of the giant Saturn Five rocket, we are in a place where this constitutes a scarce national resource, and we must continuously reask ourselves the question, what is the best use of each one of these launch vehicles, should we use them for lunar trips or should we be using them for such earth orbital applications as, for example, putting up space station modules, or other heavy lifts.

This will be, as it has been, a continuous question before us, one that should be addressed, particularly as

we approach the Apollo 15, in back of 14, we need to make these decisions within relatively short period of time.

Beyond that I think a very basic question we have to ask ourselves is the relative priority of the space shuttle program and the space station program, and the space tug program, and then the widely diversified programs we have in our scientific missions and in our application of satellite programs and we certainly want to continue to increase our aeronautical R&D, and this is going to obviously require hard decisions since the resources are limited, and we have to stretch this over a large number of different activities.

It's very important I think, as we face these issues and make these decisions, that we take a very long range view because the direction that the space program takes in the 1970's is indeed going to cast a shadow through to the end of the century. And for this reason, we convened some of the top long range thinkers in the agency recently at a special session down at our Wallops Station, to ask ourselves what progress man should and will make in space through the year 2000.

We got the best thinking we could on such things as launch vehicles, the exploration of the planets, the colonization of the moon, and from this we have distilled out a kind of prospectus for man's conquest of space through the year 2000. We are moving this through our writing and printing process as rapidly as possible, and we will make it available to you within about a month, as soon as it is available, for your own critical evaluation.

I think that with this kind of a background as to where we should be going in the future, and the kinds of decisions that have already been made in the '71 budget, which will now be buttressed in the '72 and '73, that these critical issues will be identified and faced, and that the program will move ahead.

QUESTION: Dr. Paine, speaking of the long range view you mentioned, do you think that the public generally is prepared to accept a long range space program which would call for an expenditure of three to four billion dollars a year?

DR. PAINE: I certainly think the answer to that is a resounding yes. In my view there is a great depth of support in the American public for the space program.

I travel a great deal around the country. I try to give a couple of talks a month to widely diversified audiences, and everywhere I go I encounter great support for the program.

I was talking to Arthur Clark recently, who has a standard lecture circuit among the young people, particularly of college age, throughout the country. He restricts himself now only to audiences in this age group. And he reports also that everywhere he goes, he gets very large audiences and great support for the program.

The President yesterday reiterated his long range support for the program. The fact that we just got ninety-eight percent of our budget request this year from the Congress, that last year we got better than ninety-nine percent, again I think indicates that the support is there.

Now this is not support for a grandiose, wild orgy of spending program at all. It's support, however, for a sensible program at about the current level. And my own hope and expectation is that we have now slimmed down NASA to the point where it should continue as a standard part of American life at its present levels, or perhaps slightly increased.

I would like to add one statement to that, extending the question really beyond America, really onto a global scale.. I have done a great deal of traveling abroad in the last year, discussing with the leaders of European nations, Canada, Australia, Japan also, about the future of this program as they see it, and the degree to which they may be interested in joining with us on some of these major projects, like the space shuttle and perhaps an international space station.

And I find a great deal of support overseas also for continuing on with the conquest of space, both the exploration aspects and of course also the business of finding down to earth applications for the benefit of man in the short range.

I think that the space program's value to America and to the world is such that it is built now on a very solid foundation.

QUESTION: Not questioning your response, but I am just wondering whether or not in your traveling around, you are not being exposed to a space-supportive type audience, for one thing; in relation to Mr. Clark, I am wondering whether or not he is not talking to a generation that has grown up in the space age and is supportive of it.

I am wondering about that middle, great middle group of people who are currently the tax payers and voters, and in cash bind themselves, whether or not you feel there is support in that segment, because that is the segment that is going to carry this program over, if indeed it does.

DR. PAINE: John, these are pretty hard minded people, and I think that if you look at the space program and its expenditures on a gimlet-eyed banker perspective, that you can justify the fact that the tax payer is getting a great deal for his money in the space program. The fact that the aerospace industry is the largest manufacturing industry in the country, that it accounts for twice the total net balance of trade that the American economy enjoys overseas, the fact that we have been able to revolutionize areas like weather forecasting and communications, the defense implications of having a strong aerospace industry, I think that the value to the United States of this program is very generally appreciated.

When I say I go out to audiences, I mean general audiences, audiences like a group of circuit judges, Kiwanis Clubs, college lecture circuits, general lecture circuits. I try to make this audience as diversified as possible. And I find very general acceptance. I am quite sure that this program will continue to enjoy support by the people.

QUESTION: Mr. Paine, I believe when you were previously with General Electric that you were on the West Coast in the Tempo Operation, which I understood to be advanced planning. Will your new post at G.E. have that character? Can you tell us a little more about that?

DR. PAINE: I really can't say much about the new

post in General Electric. This has come up fairly recently. But it will not be a planning or staff character. It is a direct line, executive responsibility.

QUESTION: Tom, I ask this question with some reticence, but in view of the fact that you came from G. E. into NASA, and are going from NASA directly back to G.E., the fact that G. E. has figured in some of the problems that NASA has had recently, and so forth, I think legitimately opens the question of your long-term relationship with G. E. and so forth, and not to put any sharper point on the question than that, can you just discourse a little about this.

DR. PAINE: I think that's a perfectly proper question, Bill. Much more proper than many you have asked in the past.

(Laughter.)

The question of a return to General Electric was very frankly one that I asked myself very carefully. The implication of a person from industry coming into government and then being -- favoring that particular company, and then going back out again into a lush job, as a sort of reward for this, is obviously a model that people looking for venality might adopt.

Very frankly, when I left General Electric, I had no intention whatsoever of ever returning, and I'm rather surprised that it has turned out this way. As any government employee would do, I divested myself of all of my stock, at the top of the market, I might add. And since that time, I have participated actually in rather few matters where General Electric was involved, and at no time have I ever been in a position where I cast a deciding vote in favor, or against G. E. as far as that goes.

So that really this problem is more a shadow problem than a substance problem. But it is nevertheless an important problem because I agree with Chairman McClellan, that not only should we operate in the government in a correct manner, but we should also have the appearance of operating in a correct manner.

And I asked myself before reaching the decision to return to G. E. whether this really was a proper thing

to do. One of the strictures I put on myself in leaving the government was that I would not work in the aerospace area because I didn't want to be in a position of discussing matters with my former colleagues in this area.

But beyond that there was the question of --- and we have had this ATS F&G satellite procurement -- incidentally, my discussions with G. E. have been after that, not before of course. And since I started my discussions with G. E. in the last few weeks, I have rigorously excluded myself from any matter affecting them, and will of course continue to do so.

But my conclusion was that I have operated in this job in a way that did not favor General Electric or anybody else, that I called all the shots without fear or favor as I saw them, that I had a completely clear conscience and am prepared to answer any questions that anybody wants to ask on this, and that there was no reason therefore for not returning to General Electric if this was the thing that I wished to do, as it was.

QUESTION: Dr. Paine, in your letter to the NASA employees, you said that your new job involves important national problems and technical opportunities outside the aerospace area. I wonder if you would amplify on that. Will this be in the ecology, or the environment, or what?

DR. PAINE: I really can't amplify that, because any announcement of that sort would have to come from General Electric.

QUESTION: Dr. Paine, with a number of belt-tightening decisions, specifically regarding the Saturn Five, yet to be made in NASA, frankly sir, I wonder just how appropriate is it for the head of NASA to quite right now; even if your decision, as you said yesterday, had nothing to do with budget considerations, aren't you in fact giving that impression to the general public?

DR. PAINE: Well, I certainly think that the ideal time to quite really never comes in a job. Obviously, I could stay on, I could do some additional work in what we should do next in the lunar landing program, where we should

start now in the '72 budget. But all things considered, I think this is as appropriate time as we will ever have.

The next Apollo mission is six months or so in advance, the '71 budget process is behind us and we haven't yet started the '72 process. The time is not ideal; it never will be. But I think this is as good a time as we will probably see within the next couple of years.

QUESTION: Dr. Paine, I'd like to expand on that a little bit, because the space program is at its lowest valley that it's been since its inception. Right now you are trying to get international cooperation with the Soviet Union and the European countries on the space shuttle program. The Congress has just completed its almost successful onslaught -- one of its best onslaughts on the space budget.

You have a '72 budget which may be under greater onslaught than the one we have had this year. You still do not have a space station program for the next ten years. In fact we are almost a year away from asking for that program.

Is this the best time for an administrator of a space agency to leave, regardless of the personal reasons?

DR. PAINE: I think I would take issue with some of the facts of the statement that led up to the question. We do have approval in the 1971 budget for both our space shuttle and space station studies, and in fact this was specifically put to a vote in the Senate, on the Floor, with a specific amendment to cut these items out. And it won by quite a large majority -- the keeping them in.

So we do have a strong expression from the Senate that these programs are worthwhile; in as far as at least as the study phase goes, these will be in there.

As far as the '72 budget goes, I haven't yet discussed with the President the '72 budget, but in our general discussions he has emphasized to me again his strong continuing support for a space program that will

proceed in a balanced way as a fundamental part of the American society. And I have no question that there will be good support within the Administration.

I think the fact that we got in the last two years, over ninety-nine percent last year, over ninety-eight percent this year of the President's budget requests, in the Congress, really refutes the idea that there is a great deal of difficulty in moving ahead with these programs. I am quite confident that they will move ahead.

Now as to what particular date we have a space shuttle, a space station, and so forth, these are the kinds of things which I think the new Administrator will certainly be addressing with the Administration and with the Congress. And exactly where the dates will come out, does remain to be seen. But I have no question that we are embarked in the right direction, and I think reasonable men can discuss the pace at which the program will proceed. My own guess is that we will see, within the next year, some substantial Soviet advancements in space again. I think that we will see continuing opportunities in the American space program for additional investments that will appear very attractive.

And I think the program is very solidly based, and on the contrary, this is a good time for a new Administrator to take over. If somebody offered me the job and I were outside today, I'd grab it.

QUESTION: Would you address yourself to your disappointment, or otherwise, on the budget cuts, on how far NASA's money has gone downhill.

DR. PAINE: That's a very good question, because I think it amplifies my general statement, which I admit is rather bland, that I am not leaving because of budget cuts,

My own feeling about this was that at the conclusion of the Apollo program, we in NASA should examine very realistically the environment that NASA operated in, both within the government and generally within the nation. And come up with what would be the appropriate levels of programs for the 1970's. We had to do this freed of the hoopla, tickertape parades, and celebrations, because, being sound

technical people, we know that these passions come and go, but that the kinds of programs that we have to launch and carry out take a number of years to reach completion. We have to be planning for the environment for the '72, '73, '74, '75 period, even though the great excitement of the moon landing was with us at the time we were looking ahead.

And it was our view that reductions were going to be appropriate, that the national mood was such that the programs of the lunar landing type probably would not be sustainable in the 1970's.

Now I for one was disappointed that this was indeed the mood of the country as I judged it, and I think as most of you perhaps would judge it too. We have come a long way from the exuberance of the early '60's, and I think fortunately, we have come a long way from the sharp reaction to Sputnik and the beat-the-Russians attitude, which had so much to do with the early decisions in the space programs of the '60's.

I think as we have approached the '70's, we have said that a budget level of the three and a half to four million dollar level would be an appropriate level for NASA in the next couple of years, and last year we got 3.6, this year we're coming in a little less than that.

And although I would like to see it slightly more, I can't say really that, in the present status of the country, that the space budget that we have is out of line. We have a lot of other problems in the country. We've got the war in Southeast Asia, which of course is costing many times the level of the space program. We've got all the domestic problems of the country. We've got all the economic problems, inflation. And it seems to me that the level we have come up with is a reasonable one.

We in NASA have tried to accept this level as gracefully as possible. Now it does represent, from the peak expenditures in NASA, a cutting in half of the American space program. And it has meant great dislocation in many parts of the country, particularly in Southern California, and it has dissipated some very valuable resource.

But having said that, I think I also have to concede that much of this peak expenditure was devoted to building up the permanent facilities at places like Cape Kennedy and Houston, Mississippi Test, and that the core that's been left over as we have done this pruning, is indeed a hard hitting core. I think the programs we have will indeed keep a great deal of momentum in space, and although I would certainly like to see the space program somewhat larger, I believe that on balance, we've got a darn good program, and I felt that my job in this final year was to trim the agency down and to get it into a position where it was as strong as possible, despite the fact that the cuts had to be made.

QUESTION: Dr. Paine, you said that you can't see that it's out of line, the budget as we have it now and you would like to see it stronger. Is this an indication that we are not going to go up a little bit, like we would have to according to the space task group, to develop these systems you were talking about for the decade of the '70's? I think they have talked about budgets that went up about four billion dollars for f.y. '72 in order to do this, and f.y. '73.

DR. PAINE: I wouldn't comment on the specific numbers. I think you are a little high on them. But to make a general statement, I certainly hope that the space budget will increase. I hope that it will not only increase at the same level as inflation, I hope it will increase at the same level as the gross national product and remain a steady percentage of the American economy.

So that my hope is that the present level of NASA is its lowest level, and that we will then begin to see a modest growth. This will do a great deal for us. It will allow us to go back out on the campuses and bring the young people into the program, which we haven't been able to do, in the last few years.

It should arrest this increasing average age of the NASA employees. It should allow us to begin to get contracts out into the industrial sector and to hold together some of these teams.

So I very much hope that we will see an increase in the space budget in the years to come.

QUESTION: Dr. Paine, in recent months, there has been some private conversation, and a few of the astronauts have said publicly that morale -- they have concerns about morale in view of these cutbacks. Is there a morale problem in NASA that you are aware of?

DR. PAINE: Well, I certainly share their concern and this has been a very important consideration as we have made these reductions. We have done everything that we possibly could to ensure that the Apollo program, for example, where we must put safety and reliability at the very top of our priority list, that this would not be in any way affected with respect to its quality and its ability to fly these missions in the most forward looking, competent way.

At the same time we have felt that the Apollo program should not remain on a round-the-clock, twenty-four hours, a couple of shifts operating down at the Cape, but rather we should reduce it down to a one shift operation but keeping on that one shift the most competent people and the people who had had the great experience in the program.

In this connection, one of our concerns after the Apollo Thirteen mission, looking back on that mission, was to ask ourselves whether or not the problem that we encountered there was due to any new people being brought or cut backs or morale problems. And it turned out that this problem in general traced back to a period of rapid growth at NASA.

QUESTION: Julian was moving toward the podium, so I assume he was about to cut this off. I'd like to make an off-the-record comment if I may, on my own behalf, and I hope for many of my colleagues. I think many of us are as sorry to see you leave as we were happy to have you arrive on the job.

DR. PAINE: Thank you, John. I assure you that I very much regret having to leave, but I think it's the appropriate time and the appropriate thing to do.

QUESTION: Dr. Paine, could I ask you for a specific '72 figure that you would like to see? You suggested you would like an increase. What would be a figure that would make sense to you?

DR. PAINE: I really can't give you a number on that now, John. We are just beginning the process of racking up all the things we would like to do and of course they add up to more than we will request.

We are beginning to ask ourselves the question now, if you take out the lowest priority items, what kind of a program can we have for what kind of dollars. And I will say that I am optimistic as I look at the total sums we will be requesting, and the amount that we can accomplish for these with our slimmed down program now, with less overhead and less institutional base to support. I think that we can get a very fine space program for a relatively modest increase over the fiscal year '71 budget request. But I can't give you a number at this time.

QUESTION: I was wondering, Dr. Paine, if your decision to leave Washington and go back to the more rational pursuits in life indicates that the age of reason has finally got to Tom Paine?

DR. PAINE: I think that that gets pretty low. I could say these are the times that try men's souls.

(Laughter.)

But let me just make a serious comment in that general vein, Bill. I think that the responsibilities that I have had, not only for the two years that I have headed the program, for all the manned Apollo flights, but for the other half year before that when we really got ready to make those decisions, that these responsibilities, as all of you recognize, have indeed been very, very great. And there certainly is some feeling of relief in laying down such a tremendous burden of responsibility for carrying out these programs in the light of all the world, with the lives of brave people involved, and with the entire technological capability of the United States really on public display.

And yet I must confess, in all sincerity, that despite the somewhat sense of relief that goes with laying down these responsibilities, my real reaction is one of great reluctance. I'll miss them much more than I will feel relieved to have laid them down. It was a tremendous experience for me, one that I am sure will be the greatest

in my life, and I am really sorry to be leaving.

Thank you all very much.

(Whereupon, at 10:10 a.m., the conference was concluded.)
